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Research Article

THE ROLE OF p53 PROTEIN EXPRESSION IN RETINOBLASTOMA

Hendrian Dwikoloso Soebagjo\*, Susy Fatmariyanti, Delfitri Lutfi, Aulanni'am, Sutiman Bambang Sumitro

ASSOCIATION OF HUMAN TELOMERASE REVERSE TRANSCRIPTASE (HTRT) MNS16A POLYMORPHISM WITH HAEMATOLOGICAL FINDINGS LYMPHOID LEUKAEMIA IN SUDANESE PATIENTS

Omnia Noreldeen Gamaleldeen Mohamed and Ibrahim Khider Ibrahim\*

CELL-PENETRATING PEPTIDES (CPP); AN EFFECTIVE TOOL IN THE MODERN TREATMENT

Mohamed Anwar Osama, Muhammad Abbas\*, Suzan Adel and Dr. Huixia Lv

EFFECTS OF CHLOROFORM AND METHANOL EXTRACTS OF THE ROOT BARK OF FICUS EXASPERATA ON FORMALIN-INDUCED RAT PAW OEDEMA

O. E. Famobuwa\*, B. M. Ojo and J. S. Amoko

EVALUATION OF ANTIOXIDANT AND ANTIBACTERIAL ACTIVITIES OF DIFFERENT BANGLADESHI SPICES (TURMERIC, GARLIC AND GINGER)

Trisha Farjana, Md. Mahfujur Rahman, Khadija Akter Eva, Nagma Zerine, Md. Shahidul Kabir\*

LIPID PROFILE AND C-REACTIVE PROTEIN IN SUDANESE WOMEN USING CONTRACEPTIVE IN KHARTOUM STATE

Aisha Ahmed Abedalkhalig Mohamed, Amna O. M. Elzein and Nassr Eldin M. A. Shrif\*

RESEARCH OF NEW INHIBITORS OF STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS METHIONINE AMINOPEPTIDASE BY COMPUTER SIMULATION

Boucherit Hanane\*, Nouioua Amira, Serrar Asma, Chikhi Abdelouahab, Bensegueni Abderrahmane, Merzoug Amina

ANTI-DIABETIC ACTIVITY OF AQUEOUS EXTRACT OF CALOTROPIS PROCERA LEAF IN ALLOXAN-INDUCED DIABETIC RATS

\*Ajiboso S. O., Yakubu T. M and Oladiji A. T

THE EFFECT OF OCHRATOXIN A ON LIPID PEROXIDATION FROM OCHRATOXIGENIC FUNGI OBTAINED FROM DRIED CASSAVA POWDER GARRI USING AN ANIMAL MODEL

Agu Georgia Chinemenwa\*, Salami Olufunmilayo Olamide, Odusola Kikelomo B.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT FOR TWO YEMENI GLIMIPRIDE BRANDS COMPARED TO THE ORIGINAL BRAND

Wafa Al-Madhabi\*, Ahmed Abdulbari Ahmed Albarakani, Abobakr Khaled Alhag, Zakaria Ahmed Saeed, Nahlah Mansour Noman and Khaldon Mohamed

PROTECTIVE EFFECT OF FOSFOMYCIN ON DEOXYNIVALENOL- TREATED CELL CULTURES

Denisa Soledad Pérez Gaudio\*, Guadalupe Martínez, María Belén Fernández Paggi,, María Belén Riccio1, Julieta María Decundo, Susana Dieguez, María Ofelia Tapia1, Alejandro Luis Soraci1,

ACUTE AND CHRONIC ALOE BARBADENSIS MILLER GEL MEDIATES ANTIULCEROGENIC AND GASTRIC ANTI-SECRETORY EFFECTS VIA HISTAMINERGIC H2 RECEPTORS

Inyang M. and \*Ofem O. E.

FASTING VS. NON FASTING LIPID PROFILE AMONG SUDANESE IN KHARTOUM STATE

Lena Mohamed Ahmed Rizig\* and Dr. Tarig Mohamed Fadl-Elmola

NOVEL SYNTHESIS OF SUBSTITUTED-1-(7-NITRO-10H-PHENOTHIAZINE-3-YL)-3- (4-NITROPHENYL) PROP-2-EN-1-ONE

Meghasham N. Narule\*

EFFECTS OF MANGROVE PLANT EXTRACTS AGAINST THE PINK MEALY BUG (MACONELICOCUS HIRSUTUS GREEN) ON AMINO ACIDS AND ENZYME ACTIVITY IN SILKWORM, BOMBYX MORI L.

Samba Naik A. \*, Srinivas Naik B., B. Ravi Babu and M. Jagadish Naik .

MONITORING AND REPORTED THE ADVERSE DRUG REACTIONS OF DIFFERENT DRUGS IN RURAL GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL IN NALGONDA SPONTANEOUS REPORTING METHOD

N. Shiva Krishna\*, K. Nava Jyothi, H. Ramana, M. Rajeshwari1, B. Rajini, Y. Ashwini, K. Lakshmi Surekha, G. Venkateshwarlu and B. Shankar, M. Sai

A RESEARCH STUDY OF CHOLECYSTECTOMIES AND REASONS OF CONVERSION OF LAPAROSCOPIC TO OPEN CHOLECYSTECTOMIES IN A TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL

Dr. P. Vinay\*, Dr. K. Gowtham Reddy, Dr. T. Mahendra, Dr. P. Gowtham Reddy and M. Venkata Subbiah

ANTI ACNE SPOT CREAM IN CONTROLLING FACIAL ACNE : A PROSPECTIVE OPEN LABEL MULTICENTER SAFETY AND EFFICACY TRIAL.

Dr. Muhammed Majeed, Dr. Raju M. Rhee and Prachi S. Lad\*

APPRAISAL OF DIRECT COST OF TREATING EPILEPSY PER MONTH IN GUNTUR, ANDHRA PRADESH.

K. Sipora\*, D. Vidhyadhari, Tabrik Fathima, R. Venkateswara Rao and Nadendla Rama Rao

ENANTIOMERIC SEPARATION AND QUANTITATIVE DETERMINATION OF RITONAVIR ENANTIOMER IN RITONAVIR DRUG SUBSTANCE BY CHIRAL LIQUID CHROMATOGRAPHY

M. Subbarao\*, M. Ramakrishna, D. Mogilireddy, M. Yanadhirao and Y. Pavani

EVALUATION OF SERUM CREATININE, EGFR AND INSULIN-LIKE GROWTH FACTOR 1 IN HYPOTHYROID SUBJECTS BEFORE AND AFTER L-THYROXINE REPLACEMENT

Trinanjan Sanyal, Sujoy Ghosh and Subhankar Chowdhury

A SURVEY ON RELEVANT EDGE DETECTION TECHNIQUE FOR MEDICAL IMAGE PROCESSING

Ranita Banerjee, Dr. Indra Kanta Maitra and \*Prof. Samir Kumar Bandyopadhyay

-----  
GENETIC DIVERSITY ANALYSIS OF SELAGINELLA BRYOPTERIS (L.)BAK. GENOTYPES IN TELANGANA, INDIA.

\*P. Rupa and N. Lakshmi bhavani

-----  
FORMULATION, DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF FLOATING DRUG DELIVERY SYSTEM OF CEFPODOXIME PROXETIL

Manish Kumar Bhatt, Bhupendra Nath Dwivedy and Viney Chawla\*

-----  
SYNTHESIS, SPECTRAL PROPERTIES DNA STUDIES OF LANTHANIDE (III) COMPLEXES OF 2-ACETYL PYRIDINE BENZOYLHYDRAZONE

Karreddula Raja, Akkili Suseelamma and Katreddi Hussain Reddy\*

-----  
SYNTHESIS, CHARACTERIZATION, DNA BINDING AND NUCLEASE ACTIVITY OF IRON(II) COMPLEXES OF ISONICOTINOYL HYDRAZONES

A. Suseelamma\*, K. Raja and K. Hussain Reddy

-----  
PROTECTIVE ROLE OF RUTIN ON PACLITAXEL-INDUCED LIPID PEROXIDATION

Supratim Ray\*

-----  
CLINICAL STUDY ON PANDU ROGA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IRON DEFICIENCY ANEMIA AND ITS MANAGEMENT WITH LOBHASM AND BALACHITRAK MOOL

Dr. D. G. Dipankar\*, Dr. Mamta Nakade, Dr. Jibi Varghese, Dr. Hridaynath Lad, Dr. Rajesh Tayade, Dr. Shilpa Jungare

-----  
PHARMACEUTICAL EVALUATION OF MUSTA-TRIPHALADI AVALEHA, AN AYURVEDIC POLYHERBAL FORMULATION

O.T.M.R.K.S.B. Kalawana\*, Patel K.S., Rajagopala S., Kori V.K. and Shukla V.J.

-----  
A STABILITY INDICATING RP-HPLC METHOD DEVELOPMENT FOR ANALYSIS OF ERTAPENEM IN BULK DRUG AND PHARMACEUTICAL DOSAGE FORM

Nilesh Jain, Ruchi Jain, Deepak Kumar Jain\*, Avineesh Singh, Vijay Kumar Patel and Surendra Kumar Jain

-----  
COMPARISON OF OPHTHALMOLOGICAL COMPLICATIONS OF ANTIVIRAL DRUGS FOR HCV INFECTION

Prempal Kaur\*, Baljinderpal Singh and Bhavkaran Singh Bal

-----  
COMPARISON OF VISUAL OUTCOME AND COMPLICATIONS IN TWO DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES OF SCLERAL FIXATED INTRAOCULAR LENS IMPLANTATION

Dr Mohana Majumdar\*

-----



**"PLASMA VENOUS GLUCOSE ESTIMATION - THE UNTOLD STORY"**

**Dr. Arun Kumar Harith (MD Biochemistry)\*, Garima Boradia (M.Sc Biochemistry), Varun Kumar Singh (III year MBBS Student), Dr. Kanchan Kulhari (MD Biochemistry), Maansi Gangwal (III year MBBS**

**ROLE OF CHANDRAPRABHA VATI IN UTI**

**\*Dr. Sanjeev R. Yadav, Dr. Dnyaneshwar Chavan and Dr. Pankaja Choudhari**

**EVALUATION OF ANTI-PARKINSONS ACTIVITY OF CARICA PAPAYA USING ALBINO RATS**

**Rajya Laxmi Gudepu\*, Sunil Kandru and Dr. N. Srinivasan**

**APPLICATION OF THE BETHESDA SYSTEM FOR REPORTING THYROID FINE NEEDLE ASPIRATES**

**Dr. Neelam Sreemanj Kumari\*, Dr. Shyamala Srujana, Dr. K. Rama Krishna Reddy, Dr. O. Shravan Kumar**

**SYNTHESIS OF NEW FLUORINATED PYRROLE DERIVATIVES USING PAALKNORR CONDENSATION**

**Murtaza A. Patharia\*, Pankaj K. Godhaviya, Bharat K. Dhotre, Pathan Mohd Arif**

**SIMULTANEOUS QUANTITATIVE ESTIMATION OF NETUPITANT AND PALONOSETRON HCl BY HPTLC METHOD: DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION.**

**Vasava Shilpa N. and Rajashree C. Mashru\***

**CHANGE IN SERUM MAGNESIUM LEVEL IN PRE AND POST HEALTHY PLATELETPHERESIS DONORS.**

**V. B. Mane\*, P. E. Jagtap, N. S. Nagane, G. J. Belwalkar, S. P. Dhone and Y. R. Gotekar**

**ACHYLA: FIRST REPORT FROM WATER BODIES OF PACHMARHI DISTRICT HOSHANGABAD (M.P.) INDIA.**

**Ajaz Ahmad\*, Ranjana Singh, Suman Trivedi\* and Sheikh Sayir**

**PREVALENCE OF THYROID DYSFUNCTION AMONG THE ADULT POPULATION OF KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT, TAMILNADU**

**P. Modagan\*, Dr. A. Renuka, Dr. A. Manamalli and Dr. Santhi Silambanan**

**SYNTHESIS OF 2-HYDROXY-3-METHOXYBENZALDEHYDE-P-HYDROXY BENZOICHYDRAZONE (HMBABH) AND ITS APPLICATION FOR DIRECT SPECTROPHOTOMERIC DETERMINATION OF HEAVY METAL CADMIUM (II) IN ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES**

**M. Swetha\*, G. Govind, V. Krishna Reddy and P. Raveendra Reddy**

**ANALYSIS OF PRELIMINARY PHYTOCHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS OF WHOLE PLANT EXTRACTS OF CROTALARIA HEBECARPA (DC.) RUDD.**

**R. Srinivas, P. Jyothi Chaitanya\*, N. Lakshmi Bhavani and Umme Tameem**

**DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF MATRIX TYPE TRANSDERMAL PATCHES OF ZALEPLON**

**Hemendra Pratap Singh, Kapil Kumar\* and Sai Krushna Padhy**

DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF RP-HPLC METHOD FOR ASSAY OF AMLODIPINE IN FORMULATIONS

\*B. Balaswami and P. Venkataramana

EVALUATION OF ANALGESIC ACTIVITY OF A POLYHERBAL FORMULATION IN ALBINO RATS

K. Hari Kamesh Kiran\*, Dr. A. Lakshman Rao and A. Tirupathi Rao

SYNTHESIS, CHARACTERIZATION AND BIOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF NOVEL HETEROCYCLIC SUBSTITUTED 1,2,3-TRIAZOLES DERIVATIVES

S. Syed Shafi and S. Senthilkumar\*

INFLUENCE OF SILK SERICIN FROM THE COCOONS OF SILKWORM, ANTHRAEA MYLITTA (L) AND BOMBYX MORI (L) ON HYDROGEN PEROXIDE INDUCED OXIDATIVE STRESS IN FELINE FIBROBLASTS.

Vitthalrao B. Khyade\*

THE BETHESDA SYSTEM FOR REPORTING THYROID CYTOPATHOLOGY: ITS PROS AND CONS.

Archana Ticku\* and Prem Singh

HONEY: A SWEET WAY TO CURE PSYCHOSIS

Milind Parle\* and Arzoo

DEVELOPMENT, OPTIMIZATION AND EVALUATION OF GUAR GUM AND SCMC BASED IPN HYDROGEL BEADS FOR CONTROLLED DRUG DELIVERY OF CAPTOPRIL

Himanshi Joshi\*, Ganesh Kumar Bhatt, Alka Lohani and Preeti Kothiyal

STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF COSOLVENT AND SURFACTANT ON SOLUBILIZATION OF EFAVIRENZ

Mbah Chika, Omeje Edwin\* and Ugodi Gerald.

CYTOTOXIC ACTIVITY OF ANNONA MURICATA L. LEAF EXTRACT

\*Sudha Karayil

SERUM LIPID LEVELS IN WOMEN WITH GESTATIONAL DIABETES IN PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA

Fred K. Uwikor\*, Davies Tamuno Emine and Kemzi N. Elechi-Amadi

MEDICO LEGAL EVALUATION OF ACUTE POISONING CASES IN HAPUR REGION - U.P., INDIA

Devendra Singh\*, Jayanti Singh, R.K. Sharma, J.L. Agarwal, Hemant Kumar Singh, Daya Chand

STUDY OF SERUM LEVEL OF VITAMIN C IN OSTEOARTHRITIC PATIENTS

\*Lobna Dheyaa Jaafar

METALLOTHIONEIN SYNTHESIS, MICRO-ARCHITECTURAL ALTERATIONS AND APOPTOSIS IN CADMIUM EXPOSED LIVER TISSUE OF MARINE CATFISH, ARIUS ARIUS

Ramalingam Mani, Boominathan Meena\*, Sumit Rose and Ayothi Suresh

PROFILE AND ANTIMICROBIAL SUSCEPTIBILITY PATTERN OF URINARY BACTERIAL ISOLATES AT A TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL IN CENTRAL INDIA

Chaudhari Vijaya Laxman\* and Patil Asmita Ashok

SYNTHESIS AND BIOLOGICAL ACTIVITY OF A NOVEL SERIES OF 2-PHENYL SULPHA/SUBSTITUTED INDOLES

\*Anil Kumar

ANALYTICAL AND PHYTOCHEMICAL STUDIES ON ZIZYPHUS LOTUS

Zaid Najah and Khaled Elsherif\*

AMELIORATION OF CISPLATIN-INDUCED TOXICITY IN BLOOD DOMESTIC RABBIT'S BY SODIUM THIOSULFATE OR GINGER EXTRACT

Ayoub R. Aldalou\*

SYNTHESIS AND IN VITRO ANTITUMOR ACTIVITY OF QUINAZOLINE-4(3H)-ONE DERIVATIVES WITH DITHIOCARBAMATE SIDE CHAINS

Saritha J. Tangeda\*, Anuradha Sandala and Achaiah Garlapati

FORENSIC STUDY ON CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE UNDER POCSO ACT

U. K. Kulkarni\*, Dr. K. V. Kulkarni, R. N. Kokre and B. B. Daundkar

A RARE CASE OF MULTILOCLAR UNICYSTIC AMELOBLASTOMA: A PROGRESSIVE RADIOGRAPHIC PRESENTATION.

Dr. Padmashree S., \*Dr. Sayyad Zohabhasan, Dr. Shilpa P. S., MDS and 4Dr. Rema J.

SYNTHESIS AND CHARACTERIZATION OF SILVER NANOPARTICLE OF GINGER RHIZOME (ZINGIBER OFFICINALE) EXTRACT: SYNTHESIS, CHARACTERIZATION AND ANTI DIABETIC ACTIVITY IN STREPTOZOTOCIN INDUCED DIABETIC RATS

Ashish Garg\*, Prakash Pandey, Prabhakar Sharma and Ajay Shukla

STUDY OF THE ACTIVITY OF SALIVARY ALKALINE PHOSPHATASE, CONCENTRATION OF SALIVARY CALCIUM AND PHOSPHOROUS IN DENTAL CARIES

Dr. Arshiya Jadhav\*, Dr. S. P. Dhone, Dr. P. E. Jagtap, Dr. Anand Shigli, Dr. G. J. Belwalkar, Dr. N. S. Nagane

#### Review Article

NANOEMULSION FOR COSMETIC APPLICATION

Padmadevi Chellapa, Farah Diana Ariffin, Ahmad M. Eid, Asaad A. Almahgoubi, Aref T. Mohamed, Yo usef S. Issa and Nagib A. Elmarzugi,\*

REGULATORY ROLES OF POLYAMINES AND ORNITHINE DECARBOXYLASE IN THE GROWTH OF  
CANCER CELLS

Raymond R. Tjandrawinata\*

NEUROLOGICAL COMPLICATION OF ANDERSON-FABRY DISEASE AND IMPACT OF ENZYME  
REPLACEMENT

Antonino Tuttolomondo\*, Irene Simonetta, Rosaria Pecoraro, Salvatore Miceli, Valentina Zappulla, V  
alerio Vassallo and Antonio Pinto

MICROSPONGE A NOVEL NEW DRUG DELIVERY SYSTEM: A REVIEW

Swapnil Lembhe\* and Asish Dev

WOODâ€™S LAMP EXAMINATION: A SIMPLE AND QUICK BEDSIDE TEST FOR DIAGNOSING  
PORPHYRIA CUTANEA TARDA.

Premanshu Bhushan M.B.B.S, M.D, Konchok Dorjay M.B.B.S, D.V.D. and Tasleem Arif\*

ELWA (ALOE BARBADENSIS): A REVIEW

Mohd Aslam, Anwar Husain Khan\* and Shabana Rehman

NON-CLASSICAL ESTROGEN/XENOESTROGEN RECEPTOR SIGNALLING IN MODULATION OF  
NEURONAL FUNCTION

Abhay Kumar Pandey\*

NON-CLASSICAL BIOACTIVITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL ESTROGEN BISPHENOL A, WITH A FOCUS ON  
NEUROPHYSIOLOGY

Abhay Kumar Pandey\*

A WILD EDIBLE FRUIT- FICUS PALMATA

Priyanka Bhandari\*

OCULAR DRUG DELIVERY SYSTEM: A REVIEW ON ITS RECENT ADVANCEMENT

Swapnil Lembhe\* and Asish Dev.

LIPOSOMES: FROM CONCEPT TO COMMERCIALIZATION

Ramandeep Singh\*, M. K. Kale and Atul Bodkhe

ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS OF MERCURY FROM DENTISTRY AND  
PRACTICAL GUIDELINES TO MINIMIZE THEM

Mrinal Shete\*, Anagha Shete, Mahesh Chavan, Nikhil Diwan, Pallavi Channe, Rashmi Sapkal

CHROMIUM IN HEALTH AND DISEASES

Swaminathan Selvanayagam\*, Revathy Kuppusamy and Rajeswari Shanmugam

INTERESTING LESIONS OF SKIN IN PAEDIATRIC AGE GROUP

Dr. Shyamala Srujana\*, Dr. Syed Sajjad Saifullah Quadri, Dr. Teki Satyasri and Dr. O. Shravan Kumar

REVIEW ON: THE DECIDUOUS SHRUB *PUNICA GRANATUM*

Nidhi Chaudhary\*

A MARVELLOUS PLANT- *COCCINIA INDICA*

Priyanka Tailwal\*

A PHYTOPHARMACOLOGICAL REVIEW ON - *ARNEBIA BENTHAMII*

K. M. Laxmi\*

ENZYMES INVOLVED IN RECOMBINANT DNA TECHNOLOGY

Dr. Priti Gupta\*

HERBS AND PHYTOCHEMICALS WITH ANTIPARKINSONIAN ACTIVITY

Rakesh K. Goyal\* and Janardhan Singh

NOVEL APPROACHES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ULCERATIVE COLITIS

Anil Joshi\*

NEW ANALYTICAL METHOD DEVELOPMENT FOR INDINAVIR IN SOLID DOSAGE FORM BY RP-HPLC METHOD

G. Saikiran\*

REVIEW STUDY ON AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF PAKSHAGHATA

Nitesh Anand, \*Kimmi Seth, Sanjay Kumar Singh

Case Study

TAKAYASU AORTOARTERITIS: ANESTHETIC MANAGEMENT OF LABOR ANALGESIA

\*Dr. Nalini Jadhav, Dr. Shraddha Mathakar and Nilesh Wasekar

ESTHETIC AND FUNCTIONAL REHABILITATION OF MAXILLARY ANTERIOR TOOTH BY POLYETHYLENE FIBRE POST

\*Dr. Shipra Singh, Dr. Rajni Nagpal, Dr. Payal Singh, Dr. U. P. Singh and Dr. Naveen Manuja

MUTRASHMARI -A CASE REPORT

Dr. D. G. Dipankar\*, Dr. Jibi Varghese, Dr. Shende Krushnadev and Dr. Rajesh Tayade

ANATOMICAL STUDY OF SCIATIC NERVE VARIATIONS: A REVIEW BASED ON CASE STUDIES

Dr. Avinash Babanrao Chavan\*

AN UNCOMMON CASE OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY WITH MOOD DISORDER

Nimisha Doval, Rashmita Saha, M. S. Bhatia\* and Aparna Goyal

CYTOMORPHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF THYMOMA- A RARE DIAGNOSIS BY FINE NEEDLE ASPIRATION  
CYTOLOGY

Archana Ticku\*, Prem Singh and Ivreet Kaur

CAPILLARY HAEMANGIOMA OF THE HARD PALATE - A CASE REPORT

Dr. M. Khaja Khalid Nawaz\* MDS., PGDHS., CYPHRD., FDOMS (iasr), FAGE, Dr. G. S. Sivaraman Sivakumar M.D.S, Dr. Santham Krishnamurthy M.D.S, Dr. Selvabalaji M.D.S, Dr. Nazriya Nawaz B.D.

VARIATION IN THE BRANCHING PATTERN OF FEMORAL ARTERY IN A MALE CADAVER: A CASE  
REPORT

Vanitha\*, Gajanand R. P., Chandrika G. Teli and H. S. Kadlimatti

ANAESTHETIC MANAGEMENT OF MORBID OBESE PATIENT FOR DEBRIDEMENT OF RIGHT THIGH  
ABCESS UNDER GA USING LMA

Dr. Vaibhavi Patel (D.A.)\*, Dr. Japan Dalwadi, Dr. Nithin Pinninti, Dr. Angad Singh

PLACENTAL POLYP: A RARITY- TREATED HYSTEROSCOPICALLY.

sravani Chithra Ch. \*, Rahul Manchanda, Anshika Lekhi and Nidhi Jain

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## THE ROLE OF p53 PROTEIN EXPRESSION IN RETINOBLASTOMA

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### ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to demonstrate the expression of p53 in retinoblastoma. Thirty three retinoblastoma tissue samples of intratumoral retinoblastoma were tested with SDS-PAGE to find the expression of retinoblastoma protein, followed by Western blotting and immunohistochemistry to confirm p53 expression. The electrophoresis examination identified 10 major protein fractions with molecular weight from 103 – 14 kDa. Poorly differentiated retinoblastoma samples revealed 10 protein fractions (molecular weight 103 – 14 kDa) and well differentiated retinoblastoma revealed 9 protein fractions (molecular weight from 97 – 14 kDa). Western blot and immunohistochemistry assay using monoclonal antibody p53 showed that samples are positively expressed p53. No significant correlation was found between p53 expression and differentiation of retinoblastoma ( $p < 0.429$ ,  $C = 0.214$ ).

**KEYWORDS:** retinoblastoma, differentiation, p53 expression.

### INTRODUCTION

Retinoblastoma is the most common primary intraocular malignancy in children. The incidence of retinoblastoma reported in the literature ranges from 1 in 10,000 to 1 in 34,000 live birth (Meel et al., 2012; Moll et al. 1997). Retinoblastoma arise within the retina to form soft white tumor masses that expand within the posterior chamber of the eye and if untreated commonly invade through the sclera or along the optic nerve with poor prognosis (Divan et al., 2001).

Several approaches have been undertaken for detection, diagnosis and screening of retinoblastoma. Protein expression of retinoblastoma has been reported in few studies. Combination of markers such as RB1, E2F, p53 and polycomb group has resulted in improved diagnostic of retinoblastoma. Divan et al. (2001) reported that p53 might mediate cell cycle arrest in differentiating retinoblasts, in which a differentiation program could be initiated by induction of p21. p53 is a tumor suppressor gene, located on the short arm of chromosome 17, producing a 53 kDa nuclear protein. p53 is associated with many human cancers and p53 suppressor gene pathway are present in more than 50% of all human

tumors (Holstein et al., 1991; Kumamoto H et al., 2004). p53 gene is a well known tumor suppressor gene and its product is a transcriptional factor that plays an important role in response to DNA cellular damage. It induces G1/S cell cycle arrest in order to proceed to DNA repair or apoptosis, the latter in case of irreparable damage. DNA damage, hypoxia, oncogene activation and senescence can activate p53-mediated response (Martinez J-C et al., 2005).

Retinoblastoma is one of the few tumors in which the initial genetic mutation is known. Laurie et al., (2006) suggested that retinoblastoma bypasses p53 tumor suppressor pathway because it arises from intrinsically death-resistant cells. That study proposed that inactivation of the p53 pathway promotes the transition from differentiated retinoblastoma cells with amacrine/horizontal cell features to a more immature cell with retinal progenitor cell features.

Most of the reports cited concern in various cancer. Thus very little information is available on retinoblastoma and differential type of retinoblastoma. In present study, we collected samples from tumor tissue of intratumoral



inoblastoma then tested by electrophoresis with SPAGE (sodium dodecyl polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis) to find protein expression of noblastoma and compare with the differentiation of noblastoma then confirmed the characteristic of tein by using Western blotting and nunohistochemistry assay.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### ue samples.

selected 33 retinoblastoma tissue samples from Dr. omo Hospital -Faculty of Medicine Airlangga ersity, Surabaya, Indonesia. The tissues were icted after getting informed consent from the nts. Fresh surgical specimens were immediately in and transported to the pathology laboratory. ples of adjacent soft tissue and tumour were cted and immediately frozen at -80°C. This samples e useful for immunohistochemistry test and SDS-E then confirmed to Western Blotting. The presence oss tumour tissue was accessed by histological ation of tissue adjacent to the fragmen genized by the hospital's pathologist.

### PAGE

PAGE is a useful tool to determine the protein es of tissues. Basically, the proteins of tissue can be ted into a buffer. The gel itself was made two parts per "stacking gel" and a lower "separating gel." ting gel compounded by LGB (lower gel buffer) L, acrylamide (T-Akri) 4000µL, ddH<sub>2</sub>O 3400µL, nium persulphate (APS) 140µL and Tetra Methyl ne (TEMED) 14 µL. Stacking gel was unded by UGB (upper gel buffer) 830 µL, nide (T-Akri) 534µL, ddH<sub>2</sub>O 1950µL, nium persulphate (APS) 40µL and Tetra Methyl e (TEMED) 4µL. Sample was prepared 3 µL 2 µL Tris-cl + 15 µL RSB (Reducing Sample

amples were separated by loading in respectively. as then electrophoresed at constant voltage of he gel was stained by using Coomassie Brilliant -250. The molecular weight of each protein was determined by using molecular weight as standard. The raw volume was calculated the ardition factor) value of band which was a of relative quality of protein in each sample. ance migrated by a polypeptide was inversely onal to the log of the polypeptide molecular

$$Rf = \frac{\text{distance migrated}}{\text{gel length}}$$

### Blot

Blotting was performed as immunological for specificity test of protein. Proteins were d to nitricellulose PVDF membrane on <35 mA nutes. Protein result was stained with Ponceau ) minutes. Then nitricellulose membrane

containing antigen were cut into strips and blocked for 1 hour in 5% skim milk containing PBS at room temperature. The strips were washed in PBS-tween 3 times for 5 minutes. Membrane nitricellulose incubated with primary antibodies (Mouse Anti-P53(wt-p53) (D2F7) Monoclonal Antibody-Bioss) 1:600 diluted in PBS-tween skim milk 5% overnight at 4°C and washed 3 times for 5 minutes with TBST. Then membrane nitricellulose was incubated with secondary antibody Goat anti mouse IgG Biotin labeled (1:1000) for 1 hour at room temperature and then washed with TBST for 3 times for 5 minutes. Then membrane nitricellulose PVDF was incubated with SA-HRP (1:2000) peroxidase-conjugated streptavidin for 40 minutes at room temperature and then washed with TBST for 2 times for 5 minutes, added by substrat AEC or western blue substrat for 30 minutes and stopped by ddH<sub>2</sub>O until band appear. Protein result was confirmed with nacalai marker stained.

### Immunohistochemistry Test

The immunohistochemistry test was performed on formalin-fixed, paraffin embedded retinoblastoma tissue samples. Three-micrometer tissue sections were placed on coated slides and allowed to dry overnight. After deparaffinization and rehydration, antigen unmasking was performed by using citrate buffer for 25 minutes. Endogenous peroxidase activity was quenched by using 15 minutes incubation in 3% diluted hydrogen peroxide (H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>). For blocking nonspecific binding, Dakocytomation (Peroxidase blocking reagent S200/30-2) was applied to the sections and then they were incubated at room temperature, with primary antibodies against p53 (CME298 AK,BK; BIOCARE®) at a dilution of 1:50 for 1 hour. After washing with phosphate-buffered saline (PBS), slides were incubated with biotin-labeled secondary antibody (Trekke Universal Link) for 20 minutes.

Primary antibody binding was localized in tissues using peroxidase-conjugated streptavidin (Trekavidin-HRP Label) and 3,3-diaminobenzidine tetrahydrochloride (DAB) was used as the chromogen, according to manufacturer's instructions. The slides were counterstained with hematoxylin, dehydrated and mounted. In parallel, known positive and negative controls were used. As positive control for p53, colorectal cancer sections were used. The immunohistochemistry slides were evaluated by an experienced pathologist, who was blind to the clinical and pathological features of the patients. The intensity of the staining was graded with proportion of percentage of positive staining in two categories: <10% and ≥ 10%.

### Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was carried out by using the Mann-Whitney test to assess the statistical significant difference between protein expression of differentiated retinoblastoma. The correlations between immunohistochemical results and clinicopathologic



variables were analyzed by the Chi-Square Test. Data were presented as percentage and mean  $\pm$  SD and differences between groups were analyzed by using SPSS 15 software. A p value <0.05 was statistically significant.

The current study was undertaken on 33 patients with retinoblastoma. Retinoblastoma patients were at the age of 1-154 months with mean of  $45.70 \pm 32.165$  months and consisted of 57.6% (19) male and 42.4% (14) female patients (table.1).

## RESULTS

Table 1. Clinical data, histopathology grading, and molecular weight of protein (kDa) in the 33 patients with retinoblastoma.

Patient no.	Age (months)/ Sex	Differentiated	Molecular Weight (kDa)									
			103	98	85	72	66	60	53	36	33	14
1	63/M	Poorly	ND	ND	D	D	ND	D	D	D	ND	D
2	105/F	Poorly	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	ND	D	D	ND	D
3	19/M	Poorly	ND	ND	D	D	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	D
4	98/M	Poorly	ND	ND	D	D	ND	D	D	D	ND	D
5	24/F	Poorly	ND	D	D	D	ND	D	D	ND	D	D
6	62/F	Poorly	ND	D	D	D	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	D
7	30/M	Well	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	D
8	36/F	Poorly	ND	D	D	D	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	D
9	18/M	Poorly	D	D	D	D	D	ND	D	ND	D	D
10	45/M	Well	ND	ND	D	D	ND	D	D	D	ND	D
11	84/F	Poorly	ND	D	D	D	ND	D	D	D	ND	D
12	36/M	Well	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	D
13	40/F	Well	ND	ND	D	D	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	D
14	54/M	Poorly	ND	D	D	D	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	D
15	18/M	Well	ND	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
16	3/F	Poorly	ND	ND	D	D	ND	ND	D	D	ND	D
17	34/F	Poorly	ND	D	D	D	ND	ND	D	D	ND	D
18	1/F	Well	ND	ND	D	D	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	D
19	42/M	Poorly	ND	D	D	D	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	D
20	54/M	Poorly	ND	D	D	D	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	D
21	60/M	Well	ND	ND	D	D	ND	D	D	ND	D	D
22	12/M	Poorly	ND	D	D	D	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	D
23	30/F	Poorly	ND	ND	D	D	ND	D	D	D	ND	D
24	55/F	Poorly	ND	ND	D	D	ND	D	D	ND	ND	D
25	35/F	Poorly	ND	D	D	D	ND	ND	D	ND	D	D
26	154/F	Poorly	ND	ND	D	D	D	ND	ND	D	D	D
27	36/M	Poorly	ND	ND	D	D	D	D	D	D	ND	D
28	29/M	Well	ND	ND	D	D	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	D
29	36/F	Well	ND	ND	D	D	ND	D	D	D	ND	D
30	30/M	Poorly	ND	ND	D	D	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	D
31	33/M	Poorly	ND	D	D	D	D	D	D	ND	ND	D
32	32/M	Well	ND	D	D	D	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	D
33	100/M	Poorly	ND	ND	D	D	ND	ND	D	ND	ND	D

D = done

ND = not done

This study was conducted on 33 retinoblastoma tissue samples, 23 samples (69.70%) from patients with poorly differentiated retinoblastoma, 0 sample (0%) moderate differentiated retinoblastoma and 10 samples (30.30%) from patient with well differentiated retinoblastoma. Detection of these variations in protein expression level was a measure of qualitative analysis. This procedure identified 10 major protein fractions with molecular weight from 103 – 14 kDa.

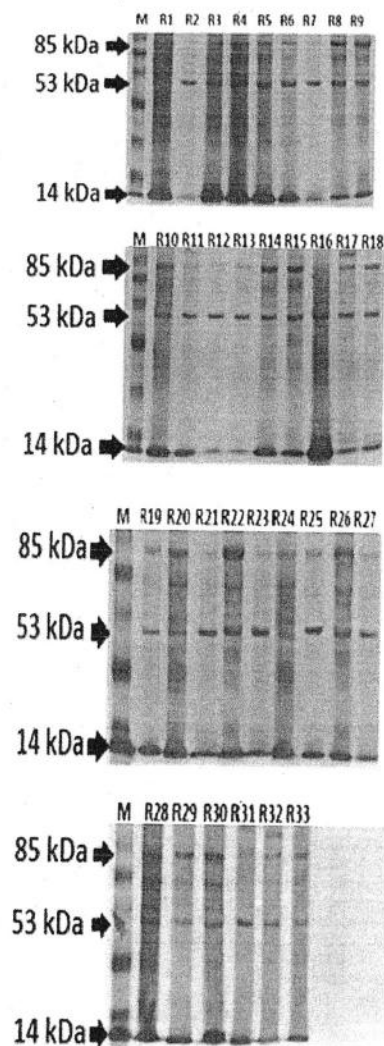


Figure 1. Protein Profile of Retinoblastoma by SDS-PAGE.

M: Protein size markers (from bottom to top): 21, 28, 37, 47, 61, 59, 116, and 200 kDa; 1-33: sample number

(poorly differentiated retinoblastoma: R1-6, R8-9, R11, R14, R16-17, R19-20, 22-27; well differentiated retinoblastoma: R7, R10, R12, R13, R15, R18, R21, R28, R29, R32).

Electrophoresis examination of 23 poorly differentiated samples revealed 10 protein fractions with molecular weight from 103 – 14 kDa. Protein fractions of molecular weight 103 kDa appeared in sample R9, R22 and R26. Protein fractions of minimal molecular weight 14 kDa were expressed in all poorly differentiated retinoblastoma samples.

Well differentiated retinoblastoma had 9 protein fractions with molecular weight from 97 – 14 kDa. Protein fractions of maximal molecular weight was expressed in sample R15 and R32. Meanwhile the minimal molecular weight was expressed in all well differentiated retinoblastoma samples.

The expression of protein fractions from all samples revealed an equal pattern of electrophoresis result. Electrophoresis examination from all samples showed that 3 protein fractions which were always expressed were 85 kDa, 53 kDa and 14 kDa. The third protein was expressed both on poorly differentiated retinoblastoma and well differentiated retinoblastoma (Figure 1). Statistical analysis of molecular weight was not significantly different in poorly differentiated retinoblastoma and well differentiated retinoblastoma ( $p=0.169, \alpha<0.05$ ).

Three protein fractions which were always expressed from electrophoresis examination, it was followed by Western Blotting only 53 kDa to confirm the molecular weight of the p53.

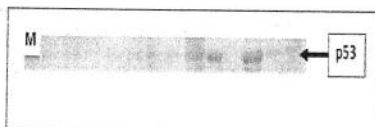
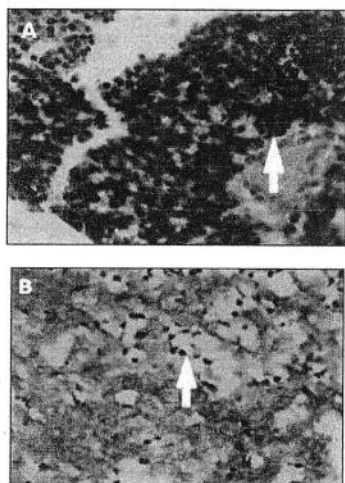


Figure 2. Result of Confirmation of p53 antibody by Western Blotting

Retinoblastoma antigen react with p53 monoclonal antibody in WB method. Positive reaction of antigen-antibody is indicated by appearance of bold band. The result confirm a positive reaction of p53 at 53 kDa region. From 33 samples only 6 samples (18%) confirmed positive reaction with p53 monoclonal antibody. From 33 retinoblastoma samples being tested, 13% (3/23) poor differentiated retinoblastoma samples express positive p53 and 30% (3/10) well differentiated retinoblastoma samples express positive p53. No significant correlation was found between p53 and differentiated retinoblastoma ( $p < 0.246, C = 0,198$ ).



**Figure 3.** Immunohistochemical determination of p53 in a well differentiated (A) and a poor differentiated (B) retinoblastoma sample. Shown are positive p53 cells (arrow) with brown nucleoplasm (Magnification 400x).

This was in accordance with immunohistochemistry result. From 33 retinoblastoma samples being tested, 21% (5/23) poor differentiated retinoblastoma samples express positive p53 and 21% (2/10) well differentiated retinoblastoma samples express positive p53. No significant correlation was found between p53 and differentiated retinoblastoma ( $p < 0.911$ ,  $C = 0.020$ ).

**Table 3:** Correlation of p53 immunohistochemistry expression with differentiated Retinoblastoma in Western Blotting and Immunohistochemistry

Methods	Poor Differentiated	Well Differentiated	p-value
Western Blotting	3/23(13%)	3/10 (30%)	0.429
Immunohistochemistry	5/23 (21%)	2/10 (20%)	

No significant correlation was found between p53 and differentiated retinoblastoma using both methods ( $p < 0.429$ ,  $C = 0.214$ ).

## DISCUSSION

Electrophoresis examination from all retinoblastoma samples showed that 10 fraction proteins expressed, 103 kDa, 98 kDa, 85 kDa, 72 kDa, 66 kDa, 60 kDa, 53 kDa, 36 kDa, 33 kDa and 14 kDa. But from all samples, three protein fractions were always seen both in poorly and well differentiated retinoblastoma, which are 85 kDa, 52 kDa and 14 kDa. It has shown that the proteins play a role in retinoblastoma, both poorly differentiated retinoblastoma and well differentiated retinoblastoma.

Poor differentiated and well differentiated retinoblastoma showed insignificant result from SDS-PAGE. All samples express protein with molecular weight 53 kDa. This result confirmed with Western Blot test and showed 18% from all protein expression with molecular weight 53 kDa is p53. It is indicated that protein with molecular weight 53 kDa in retinoblastoma mostly not p53. Western Blott test result reinforced with immunohistochemistry test that showed expression between poor differentiated and well differentiated retinoblastoma has no significant difference ( $p < 0.429$ ,  $C = 0.214$ ).

While the protein with a molecular weight of 53 might include the p53. p53 is a 53 kDa. p53's most recognised functions of eliciting apoptosis, cell cycle arrest and senescence, more recent studies had discovered that limit angiogenesis, regulate autophagy and directly influence survival proteins in the mitochondria, mRNA processing and DNA repair pathways. p53 is frequently mutated in about 50% of human tumours and the remainings seem to have malfunctions in its pathways. This strongly suggests that most cancer cells are defective either in p53 or in its pathways and p53 malfunction is considered one of the most common mechanisms in tumor development. (Kim and Dass, 2011; Teodoro JG *et al.*, 2007; Maiuri MC *et al.*, 2010; Brown CJ *et al.*, 2009).

Protein with molecular weight 53 kDa apparently not only p53. Protein that play a role in formation neoplasia process in retinoblastoma could have a variety protein with molecular weight 53 kDa, including Ca binding glycoprotein that function as  $Ca^{2+}$ -pump protein (Lchotsky *et al.*, 1993), CH-ILKBP (calponin homology domain-containing integrin-linked kinase (ILK)-binding protein that function as cell-matrix adhesion) (Zamir and Geiger, 2001; Fukuda *et al.*, 2003) and filensin on lens

filament (Sandilands A et al., 1995), ACTL6A actin like 6A that function on cell transcription process and express in cell nucleus (Anagnostopoulos AK et al., 2005). All of these protein have the possibility to express on retinoblastoma and another cancer. Beside that, there is enzyme with molecular weight 53 kDa which is EPHX-1 (epoxide hydrolase-1) that play a role in microsomal epoxide catabolic process that change hydrocarbon polycyclic into metabolite carcinogenic, there are lots in lung and kidney cancer (Lin, et al., 2007).

Sitorus (2009) said that retinoblastoma possessed paradox appearance in apoptosis. Retinoblastoma grow because the homeostatic control mechanisms that maintain the appropriate number of cells in normal tissues are defective, leading to an imbalance between cell proliferation and cell death. Generally, retinoblastoma possess an increasing proliferative appearance and so does apoptosis. Divan et al. (2001) said that apoptosis was spatially associated with increased p53 expression and might be p53 mediated in poorly differentiated tumors, but in well-differentiated tumors apoptosis did not colocalize with p53 and maybe p53 independent.

Loss of RB1 gen in retinoblastoma process is the early key of inactivation process of p53 pathway. When Rb pathway inactivated, retina formation and proliferation process begin from activation of Arf-MDM/MDMX-p53 pathway. MDM2 (mouse double minute 2), which encodes a protein capable of binding to the N-terminal region of p53 and negatively regulate its function. Besides, MDM2 protein (Mdm2) functions as an E3 ubiquitin ligase, which promotes degradation of p53, triggering its nuclear exportation and proteasomal destruction (Wallace et al., 2006). MDM2 as p53 suppressor play a role in neoplasia process in retinoblastoma (Ying et al., 2008).

Role of p53 protein in research result showed there is no difference in retinoblastoma differentiated process (well or poor). This is showed that p53 do not play a specific role and retinoblastoma malignancy do not depend on p53.

## CONCLUSION

p53 isolated from retinoblastoma patient has a 53 kDa molecular weight. p53 is tumor suppressor gen, but p53 in both poor and well differentiated retinoblastoma are inactive with low expression p53 on Western Blotting 18% (6/33) and 21% (7/33) on immunohistochemistry test. It showed that p53 do not play significant role in retinoblastoma.

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